

THE
RURAL DISTRICT OF ELY

ANNUAL REPORT

for the year

1950

by

K. S. MAURICE - SMITH,

M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.,

Medical Officer of Health.



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RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF ELY

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER
OF HEALTH FOR 1950

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December 1950.

1. STATISTICS:

During 1950 the usual statistics have been kept and are available. These are not included in my Report according to instructions.

2. GENERAL HEALTH SERVICES:

- (a) Ambulances.— Two ambulances are stationed in Ely, both being operated by the Isle of Ely County Council. One is for Infectious Diseases and the other for Non-infectious Diseases.

The St. John Ambulance at Littleport has also been available throughout the year. This Ambulance works under an agency agreement with the County Council. Members of the Littleport Ambulance and Nursing Divisions man and drive this vehicle. Their efforts are very much appreciated in the District, and their record is a splendid one.

- (b) Nursing and Clinic Arrangements.— These are the same as for previous years. The District Nurses continue to maintain their fine record of service.

- (c) Isolation Hospital.— The Isolation Hospital is under the control of the Regional Hospital Board. The District owes much to the Matron, Miss A. Pickersgill, S.R.N., and her Staff, who are untiring in their efforts to maintain an efficient, happy Hospital.

3. WATER:

- (a) The supply for the District is drawn from two chalk wells at West Row. Water supplies of sufficient quantity and sufficient quality have been maintained during the twelve months under review by the Water Engineer and his Staff.

I must remind the Council that there is a faulty section of rising main of about 300 yards length at Soham, due to soil erosion.

Arrangements are now in hand for relaying at an early date.

- (b) (i) The Chloramine Plant has been in use continually and has proved satisfactory. The chloramine process permits of the treatment of the water at the source.
- (ii) Four chemical and bacteriological examinations were made during the year, and proved satisfactory.
- (iii) No contamination was found during the year.
- (iv) The water has no plumbo-solvent action.
- (v) The following table shews the approximate percentage of houses in each parish which is supplied respectively with water either direct, or by stand-pipe:

Houses Supplied:

Coveney	. . .	164	direct	5	stand-pipe
Downham	. . .	570	"	36	"
Haddenham	. . .	519	"	35	"
Littleport	. . .	1675	"	39	"
Mepal	. . .	121	"	12	"
Stretham	. . .	361	"	10	"
Sutton	. . .	457	"	20	"
Thetford	. . .	77	"	7	"
Wentworth	. . .	36	"	1	"
Wilburton	. . .	191	"	8	"
Witcham	. . .	120	"	4	"
Witchford	. . .	201	"	10	"
		<hr/> 4492		<hr/> 187	

As will be seen from these figures, the whole of the population is supplied either directly or indirectly with water.

The figures given for houses supplied by means of stand-pipes are difficult to assess with complete accuracy; however, the picture given reflects the position reasonably accurately.

4. SEWAGE:

- (a) Littleport: Progress on contract work has been slow but substantial.
- (b) Sutton & Witcham: All plans have been approved and the Council are hoping that early in the New Year Ministry approval to go to tender will be forthcoming.
- (c) All Parishes: The Council have prepared outline plans for all parishes, but these proposals have been deferred by the Ministry of Health owing to the need for national economy.

5. HOUSING:

Permanent Housing:

Sites:

In hand and not under development at 1/1/1950	2
Acquired during 1950	4
	<u>6</u>
Taken into development during 1950	2
In hand and not under development at 31/12/1950	4

Dwellings:

No. covered by contracts placed - and not commenced or in course of erection - as at 1/1/1950.	66
No. covered by contracts placed during 1950	<u>38</u>
	<u>104</u>
No. under construction as at 1/1/1950	66
No. commenced during 1950	<u>38</u>
	<u>104</u>

	<u>Bungalows</u> <u>Bedrooms.</u>	<u>Semi-bungs.</u> <u>Bedrooms.</u>	<u>Houses</u> <u>Bedrooms</u>	<u>Total</u>
	One two	two	three	
No. completed during 1950	- <u>16</u>	-	<u>38</u>	<u>54</u>
No. under construction as at 31/12/1950:				
Stage of Completion %				
76 to 99	- 4	-	20	
51 to 75	- 2	-	2	
26 to 50	- 6	2	2	
To 25	- 4	8	-	50
	<u>16</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>104</u>

5. HOUSING (Contd.)

Dwellings:

No. let during 1950 to members of agricultural population - 21.

Temporary Housing:

Conversion of hutments at Witchford Airfield: One two-bedroom type dwelling provided.

Private Enterprise:

Permanent Housing:

No. of unfinished dwellings licensed or approved as at 1/1/1950	14
No. of dwellings licensed or approved during 1950	14
	<u>28</u>
No. of dwellings completed during 1950	16
No. in course of erection as at 31/12/1950	8
No. not commenced at 31/12/1950	4
	<u>28</u>

The Council's policy of making Demolition Orders whenever possible, having due regard to the housing shortage, is I am sure a sound policy.

There are still a lot of old buildings in the District which should be dealt with, but which cannot be touched until the building programme is a good deal further advanced than it is at present.

6. SCHOOLS:

No comments this year. All the comments possible are covered in those Annual Reports which have been drawn-up by me since 1936. It will be indeed a day of rejoicing when the Citizens of Ely can be as proud of their school buildings as those in most, if not all, of the other towns in the Isle.

7. MILK:

There is not much I can say under this heading, as the Council have but little control over milk since 1949.

7. MILK (Contd.)

Much of the milk sold in the area is not heat-treated and can, therefore, be considered suspect. When the Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries declare this area a "specified area," thereby making the sale of undesignated milk illegal, this potential danger will be removed to the relief of many.

Certain milk retailers are supplying heat-treated milk under good conditions, and they are to be congratulated.

8. INFECTIOUS DISEASES:

- (a) 315 notifications of infectious diseases were received, including 244 cases of measles. These cases were mostly mild in character with a minimum of complications. I am still of the opinion that in epidemics of this character early closure of the schools results in a diminution of the incidence of the disease.

The total of 315 cases is made up as follows :

Measles	244
Whooping Cough	33
Scarlet Fever	8
Pneumonia	5
Infective Hepatitis	8
Infantile Paralysis	2
Diphtheria	1
Paratyphoid "B"	1
Undulant Fever	2
Food Poisoning	11
Total	<u>315</u>

- (b) Disinfection of premises etc. is regularly carried out in cases of notifiable disease; also when infection is reported, or requests are received for any special reasons. Clothing and bedding are disinfected at the Isolation Hospital, by arrangement with the East Anglian Hospital Board.

- (c) Tuberculosis: 12 new cases were notified during the year. After making the necessary adjustment, there are now the following numbers on the Register :

Respiratory:

Male 32
Female 20

Non-Respiratory:

8
12

Compared with 1949, the figures shew an increase of 8 cases, made up as follows :

Respiratory:

Male 7
Female -

Non-Respiratory:

-
1

9. FOOD:

I cannot stress too strongly the primary importance of the maintenance of hygiene, both of premises and persons concerned with the handling and sale of food. I feel that most of those who own or who are in charge of food shops in the district are well aware of these facts. I wish that all and not only some assistants were equally conscious of their duty to the public in this respect. One dirty shop or shop assistant can result in much misery and suffering. The Sanitary Inspectors and I are always willing to give assistance or guidance. It must be remembered that success can only be obtained by the carefulness, enthusiasm and sense of responsibility amongst those who actually handle food and foodstuffs.

All cases of food poisoning, when notified, are investigated by me, and reports are sent to the Ministry of Health. I am of the opinion, however, that a number of food poisoning cases go undetected. When cases are notified, steps can be taken to ascertain the source of infection, and so other cases may be prevented.

My remarks are emphasised by the fact that in the village of Wilburton there was during the month of July an outbreak of food poisoning of the salmonella-typhi-murium type. With the assistance and the willing co-operation of Medical Officers from the Public Health Laboratory, Cambridge, to whom I am most grateful, the source of infection was soon discovered, and further trouble prevented.

10. FACTORIES ACT:

Such factories as are in the District are inspected periodically and any necessary action is taken.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

K. S. MAURICE-SMITH,

Medical Officer of Health,
Ely Rural District Council.

